

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
NORTH ADAMS**

**INFORMANT: FLORENCE HARRIS
INTERVIEWER: GAILANNE CARIDDI
DATE: MAY 16, 1988**

**G = GAILANNE
F = FLORENCE**

SG-NA-T018

Tape begins with interviewer in mid-sentence:

. . .Interviewing Florence Harris in connection with the shifting gears project, the changing meaning of work in Massachusetts. And Florence is going to tell us somewhat of her background and her work at Sprague Electric Company.

G: Hi Florence.

F: Hi.

G: Could you tell me a little bit about your background, your grandparents and ?

F: Well I was born in Cheshire, Mass. My father was a farmer. [G: Umhm] And uh, as was his father before him. [G: Umhm] And um, my mother came from where he was born in Cheshire. And in fact the whole family back to the time of the Revolution was born in Cheshire. And uh, my mother came from Berlin, New York.

G: Umhm. And she grew up in New York in the schools?

F: She grew up to be a teenager in New York. And then she moved to Cheshire where she met my father. And uh, so then they had (--) I was the youngest of three children. And uh, so my growing up years were on the farm. And I went to Adams High School. [G: Umhm] I was uh, in top honors of the class. My main ambition was to become a mathematics teacher, because I loved mathematics, [G: umhm] but instead of that I married right out of high school. So I had, I had two children before I went to work in Sprague's.

G: Umhm. Could you tell me a little bit about your religious background?

F: Yes. Um, I came from a strong Baptist family. Of course the early settlers of Cheshire, that's what they were, were Baptists. [G: Umhm] They came from Rhode Island to Stafford Hill in Cheshire. And uh, so then after I married my husband was not a Baptist, but he was Protestant, so my children were brought up Baptist and still very active in the Baptist Church in North Adams.

G: Umhm. So when, when were you married?

F: In 1933.

G: Umhm. And uh, your husband's background a little bit?

F: Um, his father worked for Hunter Machine. And uh, his grandfather was a fireman in North Adams. He was a fireman. I think he held a record at one time for having been a fireman the longest. [G: Hm!] And uh, he retired when they retired the horses. He was a teamster. [G: Wow!] And uh, so he got the (--) he drove the last horse drawn fire engines.

G: Isn't that something. That's great. Um, and you say your husband worked at Hunters?

F: No, my fath (--) [G: unclear] My father-in-law worked at Hunters.

G: And your husband?

F: My husband worked at Sprague's. [Unclear] Well I shouldn't say that. When I married him he was working for um, Spoffard Chevrolet as a book keeper. He was trained. He had the commercial course in high school. And he had been working for a couple of years when I married him, as the book-keeper for Spoffard Chevrolet. [Few words unclear] automobile business went down hill during the war, so he went into Sprague's.

G: Okay. And what did he, what did he do at Sprague's? Were you in the same department, or a different?

F: No. No, um, I went into (--) Let's see. He went into Sprague's a little while before I did. And he was working in the wire coding department of Sprague's. [G: Umhm] And I just, when my children were in the age where I felt like I could leave them with my mother-in-law, so I went to work and I just applied for any job. [G: Umhm] So I went in to a production department. And uh, it wasn't long, I hadn't been in the production department very long and they had a course for government. There was a government sponsored course for uh, training supervisors. So I went and they put me into that course. So, [G: umhm] during the war I was a, a supervisor in the Navy resistor line for Brown Street. [G: Umhm, aah!] And uh, my husband was in wire coating on Brown Street. So after the war he left Sprague's. But I uh, and of course the Navy line was phased out. [G: Umhm] And the boss I had there said, he knew that I really preferred the book work to the supervision. So when he was made a foreman of a department at Beaver Street, [G: umhm] he called. I had (--) The personal manager called me and asked me if

I would be interested in the department clerk. [G: Umhm] So I took the department clerk's job. I worked at that for eight years. [G: Umhm] And uh, I (--) And during that time, of course I say I've always been interested in mathematics, and so I had the chance to go into the payroll department from there. So I was in the payroll department for twenty-five years. [Comment unclear] I enjoyed payroll very much. Particularly before we got in the computer. I enjoyed figuring. [G: Umhm] And we had uh, we use to have to figure every individual pay separately. [G: Umhm] And even, all of the bonus operators at bonus rates, they had to be all figured out separately. So this was, it was interesting to me. So as the computers came in I um, they had to have someone at each plant. And in the mean(--) We had moved, the main office had moved to Marshall Street. [G: Umhm] So I was at Marshall Street in payroll. And uh, they had to have one person at each plant to um, check that all the cards that came down for the computers were going to be right. This was more a matter of checking. [G: Um!] So I was sent to Beaver Street. [G: Umhm] So I worked alone at Beaver Street for about fifteen years. I was alone at Beaver Street. And the payroll department was at Marshall. And uh, I really liked that. I was more or less my own boss. And uh, but then came the strike, the 1970 strike, and the union. And uh, so that kind of was the finish of Beaver Street. In fact [rest of comment unclear]. [G: Um!]

My husband had come back in the meantime to Sprague's. And uh, he had the job he enjoyed. He was in the lab at Marshall Street and he liked the job very much, but they were doing work for Nashua, New Hampshire. And uh, so of course during the strike all of that work was sent to Nashua. [G: Hmm!] So after the strike he was out of a job there. Here he went down to (--) They kept finding him one job after another. But uh, that was the job he liked. Of course and he got a cut in pay every job he took. [G: Hm!] So uh, and of course the same thing happened to me. I went from Beaver Street. When that closed I had to go back to the main department at Marshall Street. And uh, of course the union right away jumped in. So I couldn't continue with the same pay I had. I had to take a cut in pay.

G: Really, hm!

F: So I went back there. I think it was about two years I was back in the main payroll office. And uh, I had the job offered to me in management of a wage payment auditor. [G: Hm!] And the boss of that department knew what I had been doing at Beaver Street. And so he, this was in manpower utilization. And in fact my son was working in the manpower utilization. So we both ended up in the same department. [G: Hm!] But I uh, was in there for two years and I liked it very much. It involved going through every department in the plant. And I learned to know Marhsall Street [unclear]. That's something. [G: Inside and out.] And I went in every department to check cards to that everyone was using the right [unclear] bonus rates and all of that stuff. After two years of that, and I was on, I was sixty then, they decided that they didn't, things were being [comment unclear]. [G: Umhm] Different jobs were being eliminated then. They decided they could eliminate my job. That the fellow that was doing the work factor bonus rates could do my job along with theirs. [G: Hm!] So I was let go.

G: So all together how long did you work at Sprague?

F: Thirty-four years.

G: Thirty-four years. And your husband worked how many years?

F: Uh, off and on. As I say, he left after the war. Then he came back and he was there twenty-five years after he came back.

G: Uh, so that's awhile too.

F: Him, yeah. And uh, I always felt bad about him, because he was you know, very smart, but he really never had the chance in Sprague's. [G: Hm] He could see other people and he felt that he could have done as well and better.

G: Do you remember why you started working there? Was there a specific reason?

F: Well it was wartime and you know, they weren't looking for help. [G: Umhm] And uh, as I say, my children were both in school now, and they both started school. And my mother-in-law was home. So, and it was (--)

G: Willing to help out.

F: And it was an increase in the income, which was badly needed in those days. [G: Umhm] So I was uh, so that's when I went in. But my first years in Sprague's I really enjoyed. [G: Umhm] Even in my production years. [G: Umhm] Of course as I say, I didn't stay. That was during the war when I was [unclear] of production department [unclear].

G: Umhm. And what year did you leave?

F: 1975.

G: 1975, okay.

F: Yes. I said in a way they did me a favor. At the time I didn't feel that way, [G: umhm] but as I say, I was sixty. So I was able to, I didn't leave my name in there to go back to work, because I could, being sixty I could retire [G: Umhm] and still be able to hold on to my hospital insurance and all of this to sixty-five, which to me was a big incentive to do that. [G: Umhm] And my husband had just retired. And so, I was going to say, I didn't know at the time they were doing me a favor, but it was, we had a year together to enjoy retirement and then he was taken sick. And if I had still been working, say in payroll, which I would have been because I had the seniority, [G: Umhm] I would have uh, had to get through anyway, or take a leave, because he was sick for a year. [G: Umhm!] And he had, he died of leukemia. [G: Umhm!] And uh, so we had a year together.

G: Now you said your son was there too?

F: My (--) Well one point the whole family were working in Sprague's. [G: Really!] My husband, he was working there and I was working there. My son was in the Manpower Utilization. My daughter was secretary to Jack Washburn, the personnel manager. [G: hm!]

And uh, he was Corporate Personnel Manager. She was secretary for him quite a few year until, well even after her son was born. She went back. I mean, her daughter was born. She went back for awhile. And then when her son was born she quit. [Unclear].

G: Is your son still there, or(--)

F: No. My uh, my son worked in there and then he was transferred (--) He went to Barry, Vermont for Sprague Electric. [G: Umhm] And uh, with his family. They moved to Barry, Vermont. But then he left Sprague's for um, at that point I think that's when he went to St. Johnsbury for um, [Fairbank] scales. [G: Umhm] And uh, since that time he has been in several different jobs. And now he's working as uh, he's the industrial engineer for Stanley Tools in [Shasbury], Vermont. He lives in Bennington now. [G: Umm!] He finally came back near to home. [Laughs] And my daughter lives in Clarksburg.

G: Uh, that's great. What were some of the things you learned at your job, or did you use any machinery? You were probably in the office, so it wasn't too much in machinery, right?

F: Well no. Well when I first went in, I went in and I said, "oh, a kid could do this." I went in um, I was soldering [laughing] when I first went in. And uh, it was just [unclear] a navy resistor to a standing soldering iron and putting a little drop of solder on in. And that's, I could do that all day long and you were (--) [Laughing]

G: So what was a typical day like? When did you start? What time did you have to go in?

F: I think (--) Let me see. Brown Street, I think we were, I was going in at six o'clock at that time, because they were having two shifts, three shifts. And uh, then after I went on the test equipment after that, we would hand test equipment. And then as I say, I went in as supervisor. [G: Umhm] But uh, and of course then I went into payroll. Oh, I went into desk clerk, department clerk first [unclear]. [G: Umhm] And it was uh, and that was checking everybody's time sheets as they brought them in and turning them into payroll. I was sort of a go-between with payroll at that point. [G: Umhm] And then going into payroll. Well the only thing I learned was to run a calculator, which I hadn't done before. Because we had to make out pays on the calculator.

G: When you were a supervisor did you have to you know, kind of be above other people a little bit? Was it a little tough to be a supervisor?

F: No, no. I didn't find it tough.

G: You just had to make sure that everybody was on the up and up.

F: Everybody was working and what they had been, that they had work ahead of them and things like that.

G: Umhm. Uh, let's see. Okay. So we said a typical day was you had to go in at six and you had, did they have like coffee breaks, lunch and (--)

F: Yes, umhm. [G: So you had a break?] We had um, it was a fifteen minute coffee break in the morning. [G: Umhm] And then in the afternoon. [G: Umhm] And I think it was a half hour for lunch at that time.

G: And you finished up. You got to go home about (--)

F: 3:30, something like that.

G: Umhm, and the next shift came, [F: umhm] came in right after you. Okay. How about um, the changes in wages? Were there different wages between the men and the women now?

F: Yes there were at that time, definitely. [G: Umhm] Because I can remember when I was a department clerk, a job that a fellow had been doing, and a girl went in it and she got less for it.

G: Umhm. How about benefits? Were there different benefits too?

F: No. No, I wouldn't say the benefits were any different.

G: Umhm. Just the wages?

F: Umhm. Just the uh, (--)

G: Were the, were the working conditions any different between the men and the women? You've worked probably in about the same, same places right?

F: Right, umhm. Yeah. Well, they were (--)

G: Wages were, wages were a little, a little different. How about health and safety problems? Were there many health problems like in your first job soldering? Was it [a little?]

F: No. [G: you don't (unclear)] No. No, I don't think there was (--). At the point, [clears throat] at that point there was a good safety man that used to come through. They always had a man that came through and checked to see that everything was safe. [G: Uh huh] But um, (--)

G: Was he like a maintenance person?

F: No, no. I mean he was over the uh, this was his job. [G: Umhm] He was [unclear]. He came from, he worked in the personnel department. [G: Umhm] He went through the plant to see that everything was in uh, safe conditions. [G: Umhm] And of course I'll have to say that we had, up until the time the National Union, the IUE came in there, we had an Independent Union. [G: Umhm] And uh, of course I still go along with an Independent Union. Maybe I'm opinionated, but uh, I really felt that a locally run Independent Union did more for the people locally. [G: Umhm] They were um, more interested. [G: Umhm] And they could um, and people would say, "well it's a company union." Well they did have the opportunity of [unclear] and the company I think were a little more receptive [G: Umhm] to a local union than they were

to the National.

G: Umhm. How about promotion and pay increases, and improvements um, along from different jobs? Your first job compared to the supervisor in pay and benefits?

F: Well there wasn't that much difference in pay. [Laughs]

G: Even though you had more responsibility?

F: Yes. You know, they wouldn't, at that time it was a matter of cents. [G: Umhm] Now it would be many dollars. [Laughing] But at that point you got a few cents more an hour, because you, we started down there (--) I mean to get, to get up to a dollar an hour you really had a marvelous job.

G: So how much did you start at? Do you remember what the wage was?

F: To me something like (--) I don't remember exactly, but it had to be somewhere (--) It was under fifty cents an hour I believe.

G: Really, umhm. So going up to Supervisor was just a few pennies from that then.

F: Yeah, right. Umhm. Umhm.

G: How about going in to the, the payroll? Was it much then, or?

F: Uh, well of course in the meantime the pay had kept going up. As I say, I was Department Clerk for eight years. [G: Umhm] And wages were increasing [G: umhm] yearly to uh, some extent. So um, I got probably a little more as a department clerk. I got a little more than ordinary day workers in the department. But then going into payroll was just, was a little more over that. [G: Umhm] But then as I say, when I went up to either, I was called the Chief Plant Payroll Clerk at the Beaver Street Plant, [G: um!] and that uh, I got an increase in pay for that. As I say, when I went back I had to take, take a cut again. But (--)

G: Why did you have to take that cut? Was there a step or something [unclear]?

F: Yes. Well uh, in fact my boss didn't even think about it when they said I was coming back to Marshall Street, because I had the seniority. [G: Umhm] So I could come back to Marshall Street and they had to let one of the other girls go down there. [G: Umhm] And uh, they, he never gave it a thought about that. And he said, "Oh, I'm sorry, you're going to have to take a cut. The union came to me." It was one of the girls working in the department. [G: Um!] In fact she was the union steward. They reacted in getting the IUE in. [Laughs]

G: Uh, do you remember who that was?

F: Yeah, she's still there. [Laughs]

G: Gosh, really!

F: Last I knew she was. And uh, she said, you know she went to him. And I was coming down there and I was going to do the same work as the rest of them. So I had to come back down to that rate of pay. [Laughing]

G: Isn't that something. Hum. Well as, over the years did you experience any improved benefits in working there? Did they offer insurance, or anything like that?

F: The insurance was very good. [G: Umhm] The health insurance, hospital insurance. I said that I don't what I would have done without it, because you could have a cross coverage. Um, I covered my husband and he covered me. [G: Umhm] It was a little bit extra on your premium [G: um] that you pay, but it was a very good insurance. And when he was taken sick, for all that year he was out, his insurance didn't pay, mine did. And his bill ran in tremendous amounts. [G: Um, umhm] So I came out of that without owing anything in hospitalization. [G: Umhm] Because he was in the hospital every few weeks.

G: Um. Uh, let's see. How about personal relationships at work, and your interaction with other, other workers? Were there strong friendships, or support and that?

F: Oh yes.

G: Umhm. Why don't you go on?

F: I had um, from way back when I first went in I had very good friend. I don't see much of her now. I see her occasionally. I meet her on the street. To think that we were always together at one point. [Unclear] Then um, that was through my days at Brown Street. [G: Umhm] Then we sort of drifted apart. And during my years in the production, as production clerk, I was very friendly with one of the production workers. We went out together a lot. And were together a lot. Then when I went into, when I went to the Beaver Street office, [clears throat] excuse me. [G: Yeah, go right ahead] When I went to the Beaver Street office uh, of course then I said I was all alone. So the, the woman that had done time study for years (--) I was doing the time study for the Beaver Street Plant and her helper, her office worker, those two ladies, I was put into the same office with them. [G: Umhm] And so we developed quite a friendship in that time. So I've stayed friendly with those two, very friendly.

G: What, what's time study involve? [Comment unclear]

F: Time study was when she (--) This was um, going way back to World War II. They went, they were doing (--) A study was done for bonus operators. They were done, it was done with a stop watch. And the time was set for what time they should have to take to do the job. And if they could do it in less time, of course they got that much more bonus. [G: Umhm] And the bonus rates were set that way. [G: Umhm] But then with that last strike the um, work factor came in. Motion study. And they really, I think they really sold Sprague's a bill of goods. [Laughs] [G: Huh] Because I never could see this motion study. It was very inaccurate, that's all. [G: Umhm] I mean that was my own opinion of course. I mean I shouldn't have an opinion

on that, I'm not educated enough for that, but uh, I uh, they put in the nuisance.

G: That was in 1970 when they, when they striked?

F: Yeah, umhm. That was a new um, new deal, work a motion study. Work factor. [G: Uh huh] In fact when I went on to the job a wage payment auditor, I had to take the work factor course too. I had to learn how the work factor rates were set. [G: Umhm] So I got a certificate because I finished the work factor course.

G: Did you get an increase after that?

F: No. No. No, I got layed-off! [Laughing]

G: Oh no. Why did you get layed-off?

F: Well now as I say, they had, they felt that was a, [G: unclear] that the job uh, could be done by the fellows doing the work, setting the work factor rates, instead of me, having me going around in the plant. They were, at that point they were eliminating jobs. This is when they started to eliminate. At the same time I was layed-off I know there were several foremen, department foremen, foremen And uh, I was luckier than a couple of them. A couple of them I knew. We were all 59, just about all of us. [G: Umhm] And I was lucky enough that I was going to turn sixty [G: hmm] before my six months were up. So that I could retire. As soon as I turned sixty I went in and said, "I retire". [Laughs]

G: Well that was good. So now let's see. Social, any other social life now you can tell me? What happened like during lunch time, or whatever. Any, the whole bunch of girls get together?

F: Oh usually, yes.

G: They had a lunch room where everybody kind of (--)

F: Everybody yack, yack, yup, umhm. [G: Uh huh] And then when I was at Beaver Street, one of the ladies, one of these two ladies that I was telling you about, we used to walk every noon lunch hour. We'd go out and we'd walk from Beaver Street Plant up to Red Mills and back again. [Laughs]

G: Well, that was good for you, huh? Now lets see. It goes on to child care responsibilities. And you said your mother-in-law was doing that.

F: Yes. Yes, she was with us. So she was right there at home for my children.

G: She lived in your home. Okay. And uh, let's see. Did anybody ever have to uh, need extra child care? Did you ever have to have another one for your mother-in-law to take care of? Or did she just take care of your (--)

F: She just took care of my two.

G: Your two. How did the other women deal with that? I mean everybody couldn't have a mother-in-law at home.

F: No. No, that's true. I think you know, a lot of them would have babysitters, or take them somewhere where someone would take care of them. [G: Umhm] And of course babysitters in those days didn't get as much money as they get now. [Laughs] Of course the workers didn't either.

G: Did you lose much time because of the children's illness? You know, where your children get sick and (--)

F: No, I really didn't, because my children were very well. [G: Umhm] I got called home a couple of times with my mother-in-law in a panic because something would happen, especially when my son fell, fell down with uh, he struck the back of his head on a cemented sidewalk. [G: Umm] She called me to come home. So I came home, but, and I got the doctor for him. But he was really (--) He didn't uh, he had an egg in the back of his head for quite awhile. Another time he got hit in the head with a horse shoe. [Both laugh]

G: That's good. Um, what about your attitudes in relation to the different changes that happened in, in your jobs? Did you want to make changes, say from the soldering to the supervisor, to the clerk? Were you eager to go on, or did you (--)

F: Yes, I probably was. Umhm. [G: Umhm] It seems as though even today, everything I get into I end up hating it.

G: Good! What was the hardest thing you had to do in each job that you did? What was, what was the most difficult?

F: Well I think perhaps supervisory. You would find jealous, you know, oh, you do more for this one than you do for me. You know? [Laughs] [G: Umhm] That sort of thing. [G: Uh huh] I think jealousy was (--) And when you've got a bunch of women working together, of course it's bound to happen. You like me best.

G: I see, yeah. Yes.

F: But then uh, as I say, going to payroll I was (--) Well as a department clerk I think I still run into this a lot, jealousies.

G: Umhm. More, you're more responsible and you hand out these little (--) What, what could they get jealous about though? What specific kind of things happened? Time, or when they went to breaks, or what uh, can you explain it a little?

F: It's hard to explain women's [laughing] (--)

G: Did it have to do with what types of jobs they did? Did you have to say like, [F: no] well

you're going to do this today, or you'll do that today?

F: Oh no, no, no, no, not as department planner. No. [G: No?] No, that had nothing to do with me. But uh, no, I don't think really I was, I found too much resentment when I was on that job. Most people were friendly.

G: Very good. What was the best part of uh, each of your duties in the different jobs you had?

F: Oh, I loved my job at Beaver Street. When I was the payroll clerk for Beaver Street, I loved that. Because I went into every department every day. I got to know an awful lot of people. [G: Umhm] And to talk to a lot of people. And uh, (--)

G: Remember some of your associations? Any eventful things as you traveled along in the day? Any good news, or (--)

F: Well, no. I would stop and talk with some of the people in the different departments. And I'd have them tell me, like one of the women would say, "oh my daughter's getting engaged." And I go, "that's great." You know, that would be it. And then if someone lost someone, you felt you had to go to them and extend your sympathy. And there is always this (--) It was a closer knit, knit group at Beaver Street. I think you'll find that so many people who worked at Beaver Street felt the same way.

G: Umhm. [Unclear]

F: That it was more of a big family. [G: Umhm] Very close. [G: Umhm] And of course, as I say, I didn't belong there. My department was a Marshall. [G: Umhm] And the Superintendent at that time, [name unclear] and uh, he was very supportive of me, my job. If I had any problems I could go to him and he'd listen to them. [G: Umhm] In fact he told my boss that he wished, that he would have like to have had me working for him. So. There's something about that, that he, you know, because it could have been hard to have someone come in, someone other than someone that was working for you [G: Umhm] to come in to plan. So our association was good.

G: How many people were at Beaver Street? Do you remember about how many? A few hundred, or(--)

F: Oh yeah. Oh yes, something like that.

G: That was a big family.

F: Yeah. [Both laugh]

G: So you had, you had a pretty good attitude toward, toward your supervisors and, and their management at the time with relations between the management.

F: Oh yes. Umhm, umhm, umhm. My uh, the payroll supervisor, we're very good friends today. [G: Umhm] And uh, in fact we belong to so many of the same organizations. And I see

a lot of her. And uh, our boss, deceased now. He died a few years ago, but he was very good.

G: And he was in the management part of it?

F: Yeah. Umhm, umhm.

G: Okay. Um, let's see. Do you remember about any specific conflicts between workers and management? Maybe we can get into the, back into the strike end of it a little bit. [F: Yeah. Um] Do you remember why it really started? What happened in, back (--) Oh, you must remember some of the other strikes too. [F: Yeah, right, umhm] What about the first strike?

F: I was at Brown Street that first strike. [G: Umhm] And um, I was supervisor. This other friend of mine and I, our boss said, you know, he told us there's going to be a strike. And he knew it. And he said uh, so he says, "I don't expect you to stay, because you'd only get in trouble." He said, "but please stay and shut off all of the machinery." Boy did we get yelled out when we went out, because we were so late coming out, but we did stay and shut off all of the machinery. And people were all out in the yard. And (--)

G: So that was just during the day?

F: Yeah, that was during the day.

G: How did they, how did they call it? How did he know there was going to be a strike?

F: I don't know. Well that was, they had been threatening you know. And he said, "well you knew that there was going" (--) When there was one you just make sure everything is shut off before you leave, because we were hourly paying. [G: Umhm] And then the, the next one [long pause].

G: In the 40's, was there another one in the forties.

F: There was another one. I think it was the 50's. [G: Umhm] And I was in the department. I was the department clerk then.

G: Umhm. So you were in the clerical, clerical end of it then?

F: Umhm. Umhm. And then of course the last one. They uh, that 1970 one. I uh, did not belong to the union. I um, I was hourly paid, [G: umhm] but uh, after the Independent Union dropped out, I dropped out. And I didn't belong to the union. I had a telephone call while the strike went on. I said I wouldn't work [G: umhm] you know, I wouldn't get into that. I wouldn't go in [G: cross lines] when they were having the strike. So I didn't work. I had a telephone at home. And then I knew the [G: unclear] president of the office workers union called me. And he said, and in fact he was a friend of my son's. And he used to come to my house when he was a kid. And he called me and he said, "why don't you join now?" He said, "because after this, you know, when the strike is over there's going to be um, initiation fee." [G: Ummm] I said, "no, I want no part of it." So when, after the strike was over and the representative at Beaver

Street came to me, of the office union came to me. I said, "I'm not joining." I said, "I feel like, that it's like paying protection." Because the union got the company into this, you had to belong to the union. You had to not belong to the union, but you had to contribute to the union to work. [G: Umhm] They had to take the money out of your pay. And I told him, I said, "I'm" (--) I said, "I'm not joining the union." "Don't put me down as a member." I says, "I'll pay my dues." I said, "because I have to, to work." [G: Umhm] I said, "but I feel that's like gangsters."

G: Hm! Was there many people that felt the same way, or?

F: I don't think so. I didn't hear too much of it. [Laughs]

G: Was there any ever pressure for you to, to join again after that?

F: No, no, no. They took money out of my pay. I had no vote, or anything else, [G: hm] because I didn't belong to the union.

G: But you had to pay?

F: I had to pay. [Laughs]

G: That wasn't fair. Was it much then? Do you remember what the dues were?

F: I don't remember. You had to pay a five dollar initiation fee. You had to pay that. [G: Umhm] I said, "why an initiation fee, I'm not joining." And you add in, I don't remember what the dues were at the time.

G: Sounds like you had real management attitude there.

F: That's why I was very happy when I, when I went back. And then when I, that's one of the reasons I took the job in management. When they offered him the job in management, I said, "good, now I'm out from under the union." [Laughs]

G: So you didn't have to pay any dues then, or anything?

F: No, no, no.

G: Ha! Now what job was that for?

F: Wage, Wage Payment Auditor.

G: That was the, okay, that was your last (--)

F: That was my last job.

G: The last time you were in there. Uh.

F: It only lasted two years. But if I could have stuck out for three years, I would have ended up with a management pension, which would have been very good because it would pick up my past years. [G: Uh huh!] But uh, I didn't get it. [Laughs]

G: So in the Independent Union, were you very involved in that one?

F: No. No, not involved, but uh, I agreed with it. [Laughs]

G: Umhm. Umhm.

F: I feel you do have to have unions. I mean I can see that. The unions have their place. But I can't see going the way they over-board.

G: Umhm. Yeah. And, okay. Any, any uh, particular feelings or attitudes about the union leaders, the head union leaders, or the stewards, or anything like that? Any involvement really too much with them?

F: No. No.

G: How about um, work related recreation other than just walks. Did they have clubs, or parties, or social gatherings?

F: No. Usually every department had a Christmas Party, or something like that. [G: Umhm] Other than that I, I never got into any like that. And when we first, there was uh, (--) During the war, at first there, when we first went into Sprague's [G: umhm], every year they had a Minstrel Show. And my husband was in it one year as a [unclear] man. I never got into it. But uh, they had a Minstrel Show that they put on and it was very good.

G: Huh! Where, where was it held?

F: Drury.

G: The High School?

F: The old, our old Drury. [Laughs]

G: The old Drury High School. [F: Yeah] And different departments put on a different (--)

F: No. It was put on for the whole of uh, the all of Sprague's. They'd have different ones to (--)

G: Did they have singers, or dancers, or (--)

F: Yes we had some. And [unclear] men, which they wouldn't have now. [Laughs] My husband was one of them.

G: Would they, did they charge for that, or that was just (--)

F: Oh yes. No, that was, that was uh, (--) And I don't remember what the, what the money was going for. It was during the war. No doubt it was something related.

G: Let's see. Let's go back to um, maybe during the war again. And um, go over a little bit more about that. When, when people, (--) When the men starting coming back, was there any conflict with all the women that were, were there? Did they, you know, the men needed work too. And they were probably going to start replacing some of the, the women there.

F: You know, I don't remember anything. No, I don't remember any problems there. As I say, of course a lot of the lines went out, because they were related. In fact the one at Brown Street, the Navy, that was all Navy resistors. [G: Umhm] And uh, that line went out at the end of the war. [G: Umhm] And uh, so I don't remember any uh, any problems with the men coming back in. [G: unclear] [Unclear] been a woman's [unclear] anyway. They hired a lot more women than were men [unclear]. [G: Umhm] I think the idea was that women would sit there and work at this small component better than a man.

G: How did, how did um, your, your work effect uh, your married and home life? Did it have much of a bearing? Did you always go home and talk about what happened everyday?

F: Oh yes. I think, I think you reviewed everything, you know? Particularly both of us working at Sprague's at the time, so much of the time.

G: Did he have a lot of stories to tell at the end? Was he in an eventful time?

F: No, no.

G: Just regular times. How about outside friendships? Did work affect any outside relationships? Neighbors, or (--)

F: Yes. I think um, well it was back in you know, the early days there that we um, you formed your own group, my husband and I and uh, several other couples. You know, that maybe the husband or the wife had worked in Sprague's. And we had a group. About every Saturday we'd go to one another's house and [G: umhm] have a few drinks, and a few, and something to eat.

G: Yeah, [unclear]. Did it, did it affect community involvement at all, working at Sprague's? Were you in other different organizations because of them, or?

F: No. No. I would say that you know, I'm very active in community now, but I never was during the times that I worked in Sprague's.

G: Let's see. The next one here is uh, the depression years, the 1930's. What was it like to be in North Adams around that time? Do you remember?

F: Of course I was married during depression years. [Laughs] [G: Umhm] And as a matter of fact my husband was working for Spoffard Chevrolet at the time as a bookkeeper. I think he was

getting about \$18.00 a week, or something like that, which was better that they were getting in the Arnold Print Works at the time. [G: Umhm] And uh, so he was uh, and we were with his folks. We moved in with his folks. And it was uh, [G: umhm] (--) So we had um (--) But I know many of his friends, two of his friends that I'm still very friendly with today were in the um, WPA. [G: Umhm] Yup, they were working for the WPA.

G: And that was one of those (--)

F: Work projects [G: comment unclear] that uh, where they went out into the woods, and cleared woods and all of this sort of (--) There were two of his very close friends were working on that.

G: Now how did you, how did you really cope with it? Now you, were you working then also?

F: No. No.

G: The children were younger.

F: Yup, [unclear] Two little ones.

G: And you managed to make ends meet?

F: Yeah, we managed, but yeah, in times it was kind of hard, but as I said, we were with my mother-in-law and father-in-law. You know. He was working at Hunter Machinery. [G: Umhm] And uh, so that's (--)

G: How about um, um, at Sprague during the war? Was it different than before the war?

F: I don't know. See, I went in [G: unclear]. I went in during the war. [G: That's it] I went in in 1942.

G: That's it, okay. Um, let's see. Type of job. And when you went in you were doing the, the soldering part, and then you went to a supervisor. In that time, while the war was on, how many different jobs did you have? Do you remember how many different jobs in those three year? Did you just work at the soldering, or (--)

F: Well no, I was only on the soldering for a short time before I went in the supervisor end of it. And then I was the supervisor job during the war.

G: Oh, for the whole length of the war.

F: Yes, umhm, until they made the resistor line close down.

G: And then it was discontinued, and then you went into the clerk. Okay. Um, so right at the end of the war it didn't just stop, they maybe phased it out? Did they phase the department out of the Navy, or did they just one day they said, next week we're not going to (--)

F: Well it was phased out, but no, but rather fast. [Chuckles]

G: Umhm. What, a couple of weeks, or?

F: Yeah, umhm.

G: And then what happened to all, all the people that were working in there though?

F: Well, they started getting other government jobs. And you know, [stutters] uh, and uh, a lot of this, a lot of the people that I had worked with there ended up at the Beaver Street, at the uh, this new department that went in. [G: Umhm] That I went into as a clerk. A lot of the people that I've worked with down there were in, ended up up there. [G: Uh huh] And uh, because evidently, I don't know, that was the FP line. And I don't know really just what those and what they were components for.

G: Oh, it was just called FP? That was the name of the product or something, something like that? Okay.

F: Yeah, that was the name of the product. It was fabricated something. [Both laugh]

G: Um, let's see, now. At the uh, I know I'm probably repeating myself a little bit, but at the end of the war you went to be the [F: Department Clerk], Department Clerk. And that was at which point?

F: At Beaver.

G: At still at the Beaver, okay.

F: She was. I was at Brown before.

G: At Brown, okay. All right. We're getting them all confused here. [Laughs]

F: And I hit all [unclear]. I hit all three plants.

G: You hit them all really.

F: Yeah, because when I went and left the Beaver Street and I went into payroll at Marshall, [G: umhm] And then [unclear] until I went up to Beaver and stayed.

G: Um, do you know what it was like, or maybe you can relate to this a little bit. How it was different to work there say, in the, in the 70's than from the 50's, when you first started? Was there a big difference in the, the working (--)

End of side I

Side II begins

Begins with interviewer in mid-sentence:

G: Working on the last part of your time, around the 70's, compared to when you first started? The day to day, or (--)

F: Umhm. Well I think perhaps when I first started I was much younger. [Laughs] And uh, yeah, I think probably not as serious about anything as I was towards the last. [G: Umhm] I was more seriously involved with work and as the years went on.

G: Umhm. Were the working conditions different? Were they, did you see any improvements about you know, the area you had to work in, or (--)

F: Oh yes, definitely. I mean uh, uh, they did clean up the plant considerably from the time that they started. [G: Umhm] And a lot of improvements. Lighting, [unclear]. [G: Umhm] And of course in the payroll I went through the process of going from individual figuring of pays, to computers, which did all of the figuring for you. [Laughs]

G: What about, what about the computer? How did they, how did you start working on them, [unclear]?

F: See, I didn't get in, get into computers at all. In the payroll, when they first started, we only started with uh, it was only machines they started with were taking, we had to mark the cards that uh, [G: The time cards?] They just uh, (--) No, just these EDP cards. [G: Umhm] Electronic Data Processing cards. We had to mark them with the uh, bonus rates and so forth on the cards. Then the machine would pick it up. We had a special pencil to mark them cards and then they were put in the machines. But then they went on further. The machine started to figure the pays completely. And the operators themselves, the bonus operators themselves had the cards. [G: Umhm] And they filled in the cards. And then the cards went in the machine. And that's why somebody had to check everyday to see that the cards agreed with the time cards. If they were putting, turning in the right hours and (--)

G: Um, I see. So you verified what they were writing down was accurate. [F: Yes, umhm] And that they were going to get paid the right amount. [F: Right, umhm] What size card was it? Was it a big card, or?

F: Well it was about (--)

G: About eight, eight inches? Eight by three?

F: Yeah, about eight by three I'd say, yeah.

G: About eight by three. So it was a good size computer card?

F: Well [unclear], what you usually see for a computer card now. [G: Umhm, um] All of these

things you make out that you get now. It was about the same size.

G: Yeah. Uh, so there, there wasn't too much involved then really. You just had to verify [F: um, umhm] and that was (--)

F: No, we had a large payroll department at one time, [G: Um] when we had to figure individual pays. And then of course it started going down and down, until you, it really, it really wasn't necessary to have any people in payroll, because the machines did the work.

G: Well how many? Could you give me a number like from when you first started, how many people? And then by the time you left how many people were there?

F: Oh!

G: Let's say like twenty-five to start.

F: Yeah, there were probably about twenty-five in there when we started. [G: Umhm] And there were probably about six in there when I [unclear].

G: And they did the whole payroll for [F: umhm, umhm] (--) And that was maybe a few thousand.

F: Because then it was going, most of it was going right into, because then you had key punches after that, [G: Umhm] which were [unclear]. They punched the cards to go into the machines.

G: Umhm. So you didn't have to get right in front of a (--)

F: No. No.

G: One of those terminals [unclear] all day.

F: No. No. [Both laugh]

G: Um. What about uh, let's see. Do you remember, could you give me a little comparison between the wage when you first started and the wage when you left?

F: Oh yes. [Laughs] Um, as I said, I was, I was making, it was less than fifty cents an hour I know, when I went in there. And uh, then I was on salary which was, you know, when I left, which was considered pretty good. I'm trying to think of what I was getting.

G: That's okay. You think about it.

F: I was probably getting \$180 a week then.

G: Umhm. And that was a salary. So.

F: That was salary.

G: Now how did, how did they work that different from hourly? Did you, they just trusted you to be there at [F: yeah, umhm] eight o'clock, or?

F: Umhm, umhm. And work certain hours.

G: Did you still have breaks and lunch time even though you were on salary?

F: Yeah. You could take, well you know, you could take it only when you needed, when you wanted a break you could take it.

G: Umhm. And you just had a half hour for lunch also?

F: Uh, no, there was an hour for lunch.

G: Umhm. So you had a little extra there huh?

F: No. Umhm, umhm.

G: Um, do you know if any, if there was a difference in those, when you first started and you ended, if there was a, any changes in like the safety of working in the plant for the workers? Um, like you said it was a little cleaner and lighter. Do you think it was much better at the end? Did they improve it for the safety of the workers?

F: Um, in some instances. [Clears throat] I still think they run a lot of departments that were um, hazardous. I know that my, the last job my husband had, he was working in ceramics. And I would stop in down to see him, because I was going through the whole plant and I'd stop in to see in. And I'd say, "I don't know how you could stand this?" "I can't breathe!" [G: Um!] The window were coated with a white film. [G: Umhm] You'd have to scrape it to get it off. [G: Um!] I said, "you're breathing this stuff." I said I, I never, I always felt that was perhaps the beginning of his problems. [G: Umhm] He was working in you know, like that. Then of course everybody else did too who was in the department. [G: Umhm.] But I think they had an awful lot of stuff in the air that was bad.

G: Did they provide anything that, you know, a mask or (--)

F: No, not for that. Anyone that was working in paints, or anything like that had masks. But uh, I don't think that was (--) And then of course I remember at one point he worked in um, trychloretheline, which I always felt trychloretheline was a (--) I think today you'll see that they, now they say that it's part of the new stuff that's, they're calling it hazardous waste, it's trychloretheline.

G: Um. What did he do with that?

F: Cleaning. And that's what they used to clean units. They dipped them in trichloretheline. They had vats of trichloretheline.

G: Big vats?

F: Umhm.

G: And it was maybe hard to breath too. [F: Umhm, umhm] A little difficult. Wow! So at the end did they, did they offer people safety equipment for their eyes, or to breath, or anything? Did they change it, or they (--)

F: No. No. That was (--)

G: It always stayed the same huh?

F: That's always stayed that way. Sprague's manufactured a lot of stuff that was [laughs] hazardous.

G: Hm, a lot of different departments.

F: Different departments, yes.

G: Yeah. No, nothing for safety equipment. Interesting. Uh, let's see. How about the, the uh, the changes between the organization um, in the work place. The structure in organization say like from, from the workers to the supervisors uh, to their supervisors and management. Did anything change over the years from when you first started and between when you left. And how things were run. How you went to someone with a problem, or that kind of thing?

F: Can't think of any changes.

G: Just basically remained, that part of it, the organization part remained basically the same. [F: Umhm] Um, let's see. When, when you left, could you explain the whole part again about [why?]] and how it ended up as you, as you left Sprague?

F: Well like I say, I was wage payment auditor. And uh, it was a job they felt they needed at that point. And I went in there. [G: Umhm] And uh, so I went through the process of going to their school and all of that, but [G: Umhm] um, I know the uh, my boss called me in. He says, "I'm, he says I'm going to do something that I'm" (--). He says, "the worse thing, thing I've ever had to do." I said, "you're going to lay me off." He said, "Oh you made it easy for me." I go, you know, I knew that things are really going down hill. And uh, he said (--)

G: And that was in the seventies?

F: Yeah, that was '75, yeah. [G: '75] He said, "I uh, he said, because I think you're an excellent worker and a perfect person." He said, "I hate to do this to you." Well, that's what you've got to do. He heard from higher up. [G: Uh huh] So.

G: Do you remember who, who that was? Who it was again?

F: Uh yeah. His name was [Caron?]. He wasn't here too long. he hadn't been here too long then. [Laughs] At that point. [G: Umhm] His name was, I don't remember his first name. His last name was [Caron?] And he wasn't here too long after that. [Laughs]

G: He didn't stay? [F: No.] It's really a tough job laying off people. [Both laugh] So you ended up (--) Did they have uh, did you (--) So then actually you were layed off, but you stayed on because you were sixty? Can you clarify that a little bit?

F: No, I uh, (--) Oh. No, I was layed off. I was out of there. [G: Umhm, umhm] But of course being in management I had um, um, severance pay, that's pretty good. [G: Umhm] And I had a five weeks vacation pay coming to me. [G: Umhm] So that took care of my summer pretty well. And within the six months, I was fifty-nine then, but within the six months I was turning sixty. And the rule is you can retire at sixty and still keep your hospital insurance by paying your premium. You can keep your hospital insurance until you're sixty-five. Until you get medicare. [G: Umhm] So I just waited my time. And then I was six, when I hit my sixtieth birthday, the next day I was in there and said, I retire. [Both laugh]

G: Now did they have any kind of farewell for you? Did they have a little party and what happened with that?

F: Well of course, I mean by being layed off it was a little bit of a (--) So my immediate boss, not the one that had to lay me off, but the one that had hired me in the first place and uh, he's been there (--)

G: Do you remember his name?

F: Yeah, [Kit Carson?] [G: Umhm] He's been (--) Do you know Kit? [Laughs] I wondered. I thought everybody in town knew Kit. He's uh, of course uh, he'd been in that department from, he was head of the time study. Back at the time of the war he was head of the time study. And he's the one that hired me in the first place for the job, because he said, you know, he knew what I had done. And uh, so he called me into the office that day when I was leaving. And he said uh, the gang, you know, all of the guys on work factor and uh, had put together and they gave me a camera. So.

G: So they had a little party right there.

F: No, just him. Just, he just called me in, because he didn't, you know, he felt that I didn't want any [unclear] get too involved with that. And I had a, I had a, a party when I left payroll. [Laughs] The girls in payroll took me out for lunch and we had a party.

G: Was that sort of like a traditional thing? They did that for everybody that left?

F: Yeah, right. Umhm, umhm.

G: Sort of a little farewell, and (--)

F: My best farewell party was when I, I got a part time job you know, after my husband died. I went to work. Do you know where Little's Pharmacy is? [G: Sure, yeah, yeah] Well I worked in Little's Pharmacy for eight years. [G: Oh wow!] After my husband died [unclear] to work in there. I said to Jimmy in fact, I said, how come you hired somebody over sixty years old once. He said, well I look at the application you put in. You worked thirty-four years in one place. I decided you were reliable. So I was Jimmy's first help when he opened Little's. I went to work for him. I was the only one. I was all alone there. We [unclear] for a long time, you know. And so when I got through in there, of course he had by that time he had quite a crowd working. And uh, in fact when I told him, I said, I'm going to [unclear] Jim. He said, "oh, you're going to be so bored." [Laughs] And I don't think so. Because I was having a few problems, and with my legs. And so I uh, they gave me a party over to Four Acres. I was so surprised when I walked in. Then I knew that the party was for me. [G: Wow!] They gave me (--) This is my watch I got. [G: Wow!] So they were (--) I had quite a party over there.

G: Wow, that's great. That was working for Little's huh? Well that's very nice. Very nice. Well how about anything, anything that we've sort of left out that you want to mention and have it down for us on here, on the history of Sprague's. Any, anything that you think is maybe significant. I don't know if you have anything written down [unclear].

F: No. No, I just started to write [G: From, oh, from] the answers, answer those quest, the first questions. No, I mean we uh, I did bring some Logue, old Logues, because I do think (--) These are first Logues. That was great. We all looked forward to getting the Logue. And every department (--)

G: Let's pull it out and maybe you can explain a little about the Logue for us.

F: That was the anniversary issue [loud buzzer sound] when (--) [G: Unclear] I don't remember what year that was. It must tell in there. Anniversary issue, 1949.

G: August 12th, wow!

F: Yeah, 1949.

G: And this shows the three different plants on the front cover. [F: Umhm, umhm] It says. the Sprague Logue, published semi-monthly for employees of Sprague Electric Company. Well this is, oh this was the number 1, maybe the first one of that year. Volume 11. And you have another one.

F: This was 1948.

G: In forty-eight. That's a little [unclear].

F: See that's volume 10, number 22.

G: Yeah. So they've, they've been doing that for a number of years now, really.

F: Yeah, right. Umhm.

G: And let's see what anniversary this was from here. Wow, look at all of these.

F: It's the 11th Anniversary.

G: 11th, uuh! Oh, and they had (--) Oh, it's the Anniversary of the Logue.

F: Yeah, the Anniversary of the Logue. Umhm.

G: They show the people who printed the Logue and wrote up all of the articles. [F: Umhm] Did you know any of these ladies here?

F: Oh yes! I didn't seem to remember here. But Dorothy Sprague, that was um, R.C. Junior's first wife. [F: Uh, I see!] Uh huh, she was lovely. And of course, Marian Caron was the um, personnel, in charge of personnel there for a long time. And uh, (--)

G: These are all people that wrote maybe.

F: These are all assistant editors.

G: Uh huh. They had quite a few people then.

F: He was the, he was the photographer. [G: Umhm] He's still around today. Tom Cullen? He's around. There's Kit Carson. [G: Umhm, umhm]

G: And this was maybe the nurse?

F: Yeah, Etta Lowe.

G: Etta Lowe.

F: Umhm. And then we got all of these, you know. There's me!

G: Oh, and you're in here! Florence Harris. Wow! And you were a reporter for the Logue. [F: Yeah, umhm] Well gee, did you, did you have a lot to write? What did you report on?

F: This is when I was in the Department Clerk. So we had just wrote up, oh, funny little things that happened to different people, you know.

G: Birthdays, or anniversaries and little things like that.

F: Yes, [few words unclear].

G: Wow! So this was all on Beaver Street, right?

F: That was Beaver Street.

G: And then we have a Marshall, Brown Street, and more of Brown Street. Wow, Brown Street was kind of big.

F: Well Brown Street was, it was quite a big size then. Umhm.

G: Yeah. It looks like they, looks like they had more reporters there. [Both Laugh] Now this is long long ago. Wow, they have a, a little section here about what happened ten years ago, 1938. [F: In 1938] Wow, anything (--) Wow, Tom Dewey was not even governor of New York yet. [Both laugh] And now this, this part here, now this was (--) It says, "they gave to save lives".

F: This was the Red Cross blood clinic. [G: Umhm] Yup, umhm.

G: Oh I see. And these were all people that maybe donated.

F: The blood donors.

G: Blood donors. And this?

F: Sprague's, Sprague's had a softball team.

G: Uh, were you involved in that at all?

F: No. No. [Laughs] I'm not athletic.

G: Did they have any, didn't they have a ladies teams?

F: I don't think so. I don't think they had a ladies team.

G: Just men's huh? What, did they have a whole league? Were there a lot of teams maybe?

F: Um, I don't think so. I think it was just one league. [G: And they played other] And they played others.

G: Well, there's an article on the Boys Scouts. Looks like they have a page here on weddings.

F: Weddings and births.

G: Umhm, all that. And did you have to contribute to this kind of thing maybe when you reported?

F: No, just in the um, in the department. [G: Umhm] They should (--) Well no, it's in this one,

the department news. Then they always had a page, you turn your, you send your children's pictures in.

G: Did you ever send any pictures in?

F: Oh yes, yes, yes.

G: Yeah, a lot of people got involved in that? [F: Yes] You like to [unclear]. And this is (--) Well this is different Sprague news now. Let's see, Brown Street [unclear] is in there. Marshall.

F: Marshall. I was going to say Beaver, where's Beaver, Beaver.

G: Busy Beaver? No?

F: I don't think I was, I must have been contributing. Yeah, I must have been contributing. Oh yeah, this must be what I put in then. [G: Umhm] Yeah, [unclear]. Yeah, it could be what I put in. Umhm.

G: And they had a little cartoon here. What was this about? Did they always have a cartoon in there?

F: No, I don't think they always had one.

G: It's just a little, [F: umhm] little think to perk it up, huh? And let's see, what's this? The back page looks like a school list in there. Let's not do capacitor arithmetic and apple. What was that about? Do you remember that? It seems kind of interesting.

F: When you want peaches, Sprague doesn't try to sell you apples, but we have plenty of both on this show. [G: huh] It's just an add for Sprague capacitors.

G: Uh, how about this other Logue? Now this one was a year before that.

F: Yeah, this was a year before that.

G: It has the same logo on the top. And it's actually a little bit bigger, isn't it? [F: Yeah] That's a different size like. And they had different (--)

F: I think it was usually this size. This was just a special issue.

G: Oh, the other one was an anniversary.

F: An anniversary, umhm.

G: Umhm.

F: Well, it look like they had a (--) This is a picnic for one department. [G: Uh huh] [Unclear]

G: And they have a little safety article about driving. This is um, gee, what did uh (--) Little winners it says. They must have done (--)

F: PAA Winners. I don't know what it (--)

G: They have a little plaque there and they must have done something well I guess. [F: Laughs] The little, who's going to the circus, they've got. It looks like a monkey on the front there. Now that's interesting. And the second page, well they're (--)

F: I worked with this girl. She was killed when she um, uh, her horse (--) She was [unclear] horse back riding.

G: Let's see, what was her name then?

F: [Angelina Blotsy?]

G: Uh, and that's like the little dedication line to her. [F: Yeah] And uh, this is sort of like a little page just about Brown Street, it looks like. Just people and (--)

F: Yeah, this is Brown. And this is Beaver.

G: Oh, they've got a picture of a party. Looks like a little birthday party there.

F: Oh yes, umhm.

G: Someone got an award here. Sales, it looks like the sales maybe. Hm.

F: There's, yeah, there's mine.

G: Uh! Now why don't you, why don't you tell us, or maybe read a little bit of what you did in there.

F: Cordial welcome to our new members, Charlene Dover and Joan Anderson, Dorothy Whitehead and Katherine Kroll. Although Dick Maynard is not exactly new to the department, having been transferred from assembly, he received a thorough initiation from the powers.

G: What, what did they do to him?

F: I don't know. But I don't remember. I don't remember what they did to him.

G: What were the powers? But the powers, you mean, you mean they were management, or (--) [Both laughing]

F: I can remember this. Alice Senacle's prescription for a cold sounded all right to take, but it isn't doing the cold any good Alice.

G: What was the prescription?

F: I remember I [laughing] (--) It was a drink. [Both laugh]

G: Just one? Well that's pretty good. Let's see what else. And there's a (--) Gee, look at all the baby pictures here too!

F: Oh yeah, baby, baby pictures got in.

G: And everybody got to show their family off, right?

F: Oh yes.

G: So did you write an article like that every two weeks?

F: Yes. Umhm. Anything that happened in the department.

G: Oh then there's maybe some recipes here and (--)

F: Oh yeah!

G: And all the sports. About their softball. It shows the, all of the score and a little detail about the game, and things like that. Well that's pretty good. Did it add a lot to your social extent to have to write that? How did you get to write it?

F: No. No. Just (--)

G: Who said you could do it? [F: Laughs] Did you just want to do it, or?

F: No. You know, they, when they were looking for somebody, when they uh (--) Like I remember one of the attitudes coming to the department. We need somebody to report. And so they said, why don't you report. [Laughs]

G: Well it sounds like you enjoyed it anyway. [F: Yeah, umhm] Pretty good. Let's see, you have a photograph over there. What's that?

F: This (--) I, I (--) This was in with the other stuff. And this was at one of the um, awards. And I think this was one of my husbands um, I think it was my husband's, not mine. And I think it was his, his twentieth, either the fifteenth, or the twentieth when he was, had been there.

G: Oh, was the little party because he had been there that long, or (--)

F: Well, oh, every uh, (--) When you picked and got your (--) Every twenty and twenty-five years [G: umhm] you had a party. [G: Umhm] And of course the twenty-fifth you got your watch.

G: You got a watch for twenty-five years?

F: I got a watch for twenty-five, umhm. He got his watch at twenty-five. I gave it to my grandson and he's had it, and he still got it. [G: Huh] But um.

G: Well I think that's you right there.

F: That's me.

G: And this is your husband.

F: And that's my husband.

G: And your husband's first name was?

F: Wilfred.

G: Wilfred. And these were a couple of people that maybe worked with you at the time?

F: Yes. And this fellow worked in the lab. [G: umhm] And this is his wife. And I, then I see a lot of them now, because um, they're very involved. He's, in fact he's the treasurer for the Baptist Church. Vic Boucher. [G: Umhm] And Rick Boucher. And they're very active in the Baptist Church, and so am I. So.

G: And that's, that's still in Cheshire, or?

F: No, in North Adams.

G: In North Adams. Okay. [F: North Adams, umhm] Now what else, what else have you there? [F: And um] It looks like a certificate of some kind?

F: Oh that? Well we had um, I think it was at the time of this anniversary.

G: The Sprague Logue Anniversary?

F: Yeah, this June, 1948. They had a dinner up at um, Brownview. [G: Umhm] [Unclear]

G: Right. Yeah, up on the hill.

F: [Laughs] And uh, there was a dinner and all of the reporters were invited. [G: Uh huh] And uh, so we each got a certificate.

G: Oh, I see. This was just for your, for your work with the Logue.

F: Umhm, for the work with the Logue. Umhm.

G: How, how long did you work with the Logue? Right from the very beginning?

F: No, no. All the while I was probably Department Clerk. Probably eight years or so.

G: Umhm. Oh! And you got a little certificate here on your work [F: umhm, umhm] involved in it.

F: I have several of the um, Quarter Century Club Books.

G: Oh! Now explain to me what this is.

F: Well, as I say, every um, when you've been there twenty-five years they had a banquet. [G: Umhm] And uh, everybody had they had been there twenty-five years was invited to the banquet. [G: Umhm] And uh, they put this out and put your picture in it and you became a member of the Quarter Century Club.

G: Wow, let's take a look. Now is this the first one? [F: No.] Let's see.

F: That's (--) My (--) That was '67. [Few words unclear]

G: In the (--) Let's see, that's '69 [loud sound on recorder distorts interview for some time]. Too many past members there to the twenty-five year club.

F: No. This became [loud sound returns-cannot transcribe rest of comment]. Then it got so big they, they just started [unclear] banquet anyway. [Loud sound returns-distorts more conversation-cannot transcribe]

TAPE ENDS.